Book Review

**Essentials in Ophthalmology: Pediatric Ophthalmology, Neuro-Ophthalmology, Genetics**

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The first edition of *Pediatric Ophthalmology, Neuro-ophthalmology, Genetics* by Birgit Lorenz and Anthony Moore meets their goal to highlight advances to key areas in pediatric ophthalmology and genetics. The layout is organized to succinctly present the material while detailing key research findings that contribute to understanding a topic. Each section also contains preview and summary statements that give recommendations to the clinician. Tables and full color images are of high quality and enhance the reading experience. Each section contains an appropriate list of references if the reader wishes to explore a topic in greater detail.

The contents of this edition include a wide range of topics where recent research has added to our understanding of a disease, such as in the progression of myopia, the genetics of Leber congenital amaurosis, and ROP. There is also an effort to review current evidence and thoughts in areas of controversy such as in the treatment of infantile cataracts. Unfortunately, updates in neuro-ophthalmology are not included in this edition, but are promised for upcoming editions.

One potential drawback to purchasing this edition, in my opinion, is that the text will cover just a few of the many topics and controversies that a clinician must wrestle with. Future editions will likely include discussion of these topics, but it does commit the practitioner to future purchases. If, however, adding this text and future editions to a personal library helps keep the clinician abreast of current research and practice patterns leading to better patient care then it is well worth the investment.

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**Orthoptics: The Early Years**

A. Vivien MacLellan

Ann Macvie Publishing, The Old Chapel, Crosshills Road, Cononley, Keighly, West Yorkshire, United Kingdom, 2006, 96 pages, 12 b/w photographs and line illustrations, £12.50

This modest volume of Mrs. MacLellan’s “recollections and a personal account” takes her readers through the very earliest days of orthoptics as it “grew up” in England in the early 1900s and into her own years as an important contributor. She informs us about the embryonic stages of orthoptics, the creation of orthoptic societies and journals, and reveals to us, as she is able, little gems about the personalities of the “pioneer orthoptists.” She introduces us to Mary Maddox, the eldest daughter of ophthalmologist, Ernest Maddox, and many others who were influential in founding our profession.

We get a look into the chaotic and unpredictable conditions of World War II

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England as Mrs. MacLellan explains how many orthoptists in the British and Canadian military services kept the allied air forces strong. She also covers a few of the most notable scientific ophthalmic and orthoptic contributions over the years. The early orthoptists were, thankfully, not easily put off and believed firmly in their mission despite meager scientific beginnings.

The earliest orthoptic history was probably quite difficult to assemble from the data available. She brings us more fully into the history during her own professional years. However, I found the most delightful section of the book hiding in the appendix, under an “assumed name.” It was in this manuscript that I felt I really became acquainted with Mrs. MacLellan. I found myself chuckling out loud while imagining the ridiculous situations and frustrations these early orthoptists faced.

We owe Mrs. MacLellan a debt of gratitude for her painstaking detective work and persistence in creating this history of orthoptics. As a result of her labor, we now are more fully able to appreciate the significance of the visionaries under whose shadow we fall.

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This textbook is an atlas that covers the management of a wide range of strabismus disorders using surgical techniques of varying complexity. It is an updated third edition to the author’s original 1991 book, Color Atlas of Ophthalmic Surgery: Strabismus, and intended for “surgeons of diverse experience, from the resident ophthalmologist to the most experienced strabismologist.”

This latest edition has made some notable changes since his first edition. Most significantly, Dr. Wright has added a brief but helpful chapter on performing strabismus surgery with topical anesthetic. In this chapter, he provides some basic guidelines for improving patient comfort, including some surgical techniques. The other major addition is a fully edited color DVD demonstrating almost all of the major strabismus procedures. Additionally, he has added a chapter in the management section, “Torticollis, Nystagmus, and Incomitant Strabismus,” for added depth on the theory of strabismus. Throughout the textbook, Wright has included more clinical examples to demonstrate his management strategies. Other minor additions include some discussion of the use of non-absorbable sutures in patients with thyroid disease and the introduction of titanium instruments developed by the author for certain surgical situations.

Overall, the book is very well laid out and organized into a Strategic Management section followed by a Surgical Technique section. In the first section, the author covers the basic background information and general management of the majority of strabismus conditions. Each chapter impressively covers all of the chief subtopics and yet manages to be very concise. This is achieved by streamlining the text to cover the basic principles with the aid of photographs, clinical examples, and tables. He also provides may practical tips that are helpful for the general ophthalmologist. For instance, he reminds the
reader that sinusitis is probably the most common cause of acquired Brown syndrome and should be treated first, and to observe the position of the eyes to determine if there is a face turn instead of the position of the face. The clinical examples, scattered throughout the first section, are nicely highlighted in gray boxes. They are easy to follow and illustrate many situations faced every day by the practicing ophthalmologist. Large amounts of data are simplified in thoughtfully organized tables highlighted in yellow providing quick reference to many practical scenarios such as “when is a refractive error amblyogenic?” or “Indications for Strabismus Surgery”. After completing the first section, the reader rapidly gains exposure to the strategies employed by Dr. Wright to manage many strabismus conditions without overwhelming the user with theory.

The second section, titled “Surgical Techniques”, includes two general introductory chapters (“Surgical Anatomy” and “Basic Surgical Do’s and Don’ts”) followed by an impressive eleven chapters that discuss eleven different strabismus procedures. Each chapter begins with a helpful general discussion and approach to each type of surgery. They are followed by a series of step-by-step diagrams complete with subtitles that outline the surgical instruction for each step of the procedure. Frequently, there are surgical photographs that directly correlate to the diagram, making it very easy to follow and visualize for the reader. Many of the photographs and diagrams are further annotated to indicate relevant anatomy or to highlight a certain aspect of the step such as suture placement. Throughout the text, the author describes his preferred technique and why he favors it to other competing techniques. In addition, he adds many of his own surgical pearls, such as adding a twist to the suture before locking it on an imbricated muscle, or directing the scleral needle in a posterior direction from the insertion to avoid late knot erosion through the conjunctiva when working with nonabsorbable sutures. The textbook also describes some original methods such as Wright’s silicone expander procedure, the Wright Modification of the Hummelsheim procedure, and the Wright Plication method, which increases the range of possibilities of surgical treatment options. The surgical chapter titled “Adjustable Suture Technique” is particularly well written and complete. I also thought that the photograph and diagrams of the oblique surgeries, which are the most difficult to visualize and depict, were excellently composed.

Many of the surgeries are presented in video format on a DVD included with the book. The DVD consists of seventeen 5 to 10-minute, high-quality color video recordings of horizontal and vertical muscle surgeries, as well as a video on conjunctival closure, draping, and treating lower lid retraction. Dr. Farzavandi also includes a recording of topical surgery. The editing is very professional and seamless, with helpful voice-overs by Drs. Wright and Farzavandi. The DVD can act as both a teaching aid to the resident and a surgical guide for the practicing ophthalmologist in preparation for a strabismus case with which he/she has had limited experience.

Potential weaknesses of the book may be more a reflection of my personal taste rather than true criticisms. I would have preferred greater depth on the theory behind some of the surgical choices outlined by the author, referring to trials in the literature. For example, clinical studies would give more credence to such author choices as operating on the angle midway between the near and distance deviation for patients with high AC/A esotropia, or using nonabsorbable sutures for inferior rectus surgery. If the textbook would cite the clinical data to back these choices, it would give a greater impression as an independent surgical reference rather than a book that represents the author’s per-
sonal approach to strabismus. The frequent mention of the advantages of the author's original titanium instruments, although innovative, illustrates this point.

Future potential additions could include individual chapters on the surgical treatment of specific conditions, such as Duane syndrome, MED, thyroid disease, and facial fractures, in the “Surgical Techniques” section to complement the description of these conditions elegantly written in the first section, “Management Strategies”. I would also recommend expanding the existing chapter on superior oblique tendon weakening procedures to include more details about the split-tendon technique as well as other superior procedures such as myectomy/myotomy/recessions. Also, the complications sections at the end of the chapters could include more particulars about the proper identification and postoperative management of these complications.

Overall, I greatly enjoyed reading this excellently composed compendium of strabismus surgery. There are few textbooks that parallel the surgical breadth of this book in such a beautifully illustrative, concise, and clear way.

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